

**The Interagency Coordinating Council for Tennessee's Early Intervention System**  
**Minutes of Quarterly Meeting**  
**October 12, 2004**  
**9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**  
**Farr Hall, Tennessee Technological University**  
**Cookeville, Tennessee**

**Attendance:**

**SICC Members:**

Lynne Harmon, Parent Child Services Group  
Carolyn Gibson, UT Boling Center  
Kelly McKaig, Parent  
David Schuster, Bureau of TennCare  
Quentin Humberd, Pediatrician  
Gayle Feltner, Department of Mental Retardation Services  
Louise Barnes, Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities  
Martha Herndon, UT, Martin Department of Consumer and Family Sciences  
Judy Smith, Department of Human Services

**Guests:**

Silvia Fregoso, Migrant Head Start, LICC Chair  
Dara Howe, Family Voices of Tennessee  
John Lewis, Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination  
Larry Faust, M.D.  
Susan Addison, TEIS Training and Information Resource Consultant  
Samantha Law, Tennessee General Supervision Enhancement Grant  
Kathy Strunk, DOE Preschool Coordinator  
Linda Logan, Tennessee Infant Parent Services  
Susie McCamy, Tennessee Infant Parent Services  
Ruthe Threet, TEIS- South Central District, Program Coordinator  
Bill Wilson, DOE Special Education Attorney  
Dean Richey, TEIS Principal Investigator, Upper Cumberland District  
Malyorele Selelosis, Lower Sileniou University, Poland  
Tammie Browning, DMRS –Middle Tennessee Regional Office, TA Team  
Kathleen Donaldson, DMRS-Middle Tennessee Regional Office, TA Team  
Sharon Wenz, TEIS Principal Investigator, Northwest District  
Sarah Willis, Interested Person

**Lead Agency Staff:**

Brenda Bledsoe, Director, Office of Early Childhood Programs  
Jamie Castle, DOE Infant/Toddler Consultant, Monitoring Coordinator  
Cindy Mayer, TEIS, Public Awareness  
Jamie Kilpatrick, Infant/Toddler Consultant, West Tennessee  
Linda Hartbarger, Infant/Toddler Consultant, East Tennessee  
Catherine Goodwin, Infant/Toddler Consultant, Middle Tennessee  
Claudia Weber, Infant/Toddler Consultant

**Administrative Assistant:**

Helen Lane, TEIS, Technical Assistant

## **Opening**

Dean Garber, who welcomed the council and guests to the campus of Tennessee Technological University, and to T. J Farr Hall, gave opening remarks. He gave a brief history of the campus of the university and stated that, along with preserving its history, TTU also welcomes the future. The college's infant/toddler program is housed in Farr Hall. Dean Garber shared his experiences with toddlers on the playground, and expressed hope that the teaching at this institution will bring lifelong changes for children.

## **Council members and guests were introduced to the group.**

The July quarterly meeting minutes were reviewed. Lynne noted that TIPS information and Lead Agency information were duplicated. The attendance roster was checked for names that may have been omitted. The motion to approve the minutes as corrected was made by Dr. Humberd, seconded by Carolyn Gibson, and passed by the council.

## **Update From Council Workgroups**

The Early Identification and Referral Committee is composed of:

- Dr. Quentin Humberd- Chair
- Dara Howe – Family Voices
- Kelly McKaig – SICC Parent Representative
- Julie Sullivan – Family Voices
- Sheila Schlosshan – TEIS, East Tennessee District

The committee has investigated a tracking system for children at risk but not eligible for Part C services. Their focus is to review and revise flow charts for the eligibility determination process, clarify roles and responsibilities of service coordinators and primary care providers, and include this as a part of service coordinator and physician training. They are looking at the tracking system for children at risk by reviewing letters sent back to physicians. The committee has discovered that not all regions are utilizing a letter. A uniform letter format has been suggested. It has been noted that a formalized "recall system" to recall and inform the family and provider needs to be in place. A system for recording referrals by physicians, which will help document training outcomes, was initiated on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

The committee is also working to create a system of referral to outside supports. A referral to parent support, such as Family Voices and the coordination of family resource materials has been suggested. Efforts are being made to develop and increase resources for the diagnosis of autism possibly using an initial early diagnosis of social communication delay, and to fine tune records request forms.

The START, Screening Tools And Referral Training, a physician led educational program to educate about the evidence-based value of various screening methods and tools was reviewed. The training will include twenty-six pediatric practices, eight to nine in each of the three regions of the state.

Members of the Communication/Calendar Committee are:

- Gayle Feltner – Chair
- Cindy Mayer – TEIS Public Awareness
- Tonye Petway - LICC Chair
- Louise Barnes – Department of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities
- Helen Lane – TEIS Technical Assistance

The 2004 State Interagency Coordinating Council Vision/Action plan for the communication/calendar committee was distributed. It detailed next steps and activities along with member assignments for each. Gayle noted that the recent monitoring schedule pointed out the need for an inclusive, accessible calendar. After investigating possible options for posting, and speaking with Juanita Byerly, it was determined that a calendar, which can be monitored at a central location through the State Department of Education, will be explored. Some district offices may be able to post the calendar on their individual websites. The annual schedule of LICC meetings, dates, and locations has been posted to the SICC listserve. Dara Howe requested that the Family Voices offices in the three grand regions of Tennessee be added to the listserve. Lynne presented the request to the council and the motion to add the names was made by Carolyn Gibson, seconded by Marty Herndon, and carried by the council. Future SICC meetings will take place at alternate locations meeting in Nashville every other quarter, and in designated locations across the state on alternate quarters.

### **Address by the Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination**

John Lewis from the Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination filled in for Manny Martin who was scheduled to speak to the council. He informed the committee that the newly created office was formed two months ago with a goal of looking at all services provided for children from birth to twenty-one. The focus of their work will be to:

- 1) Look at the service delivery system
- 2) Create a database of services
- 3) Create a point of access to all services provided by the state

The office is currently collecting information regarding funding of services, and looking at data from each department. Plans have been made to visit children and families to determine the gaps and needs in the system. Local offices will be created with a system that can be replicated across the state. Early intervention for birth to five is an additional focus of the office, with a goal of prevention from entering the DCS system.

### **Family and Member Agency Updates**

Gayle Feltner reported that the Department of Mental Retardation Services received an increase from their division and awarded grants totaling \$600,000 across the state, among them East Tennessee State University which will set up a program in Hancock County. In middle Tennessee, Wayne and Perry counties, well as the Easter Seal program in Hamilton County will receive grants. Data from self-monitoring was used to determine areas of need.

Carolyn Gibson announced that Interdisciplinary Leadership Conferences are in place for fall. Specific dates and information is available at the University of Tennessee's Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities site under training events.

Respite care through the Tennessee Respite Coalition is expanding to Chattanooga, according to Louise Barnes with the Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities. Three regional offices of the ARC (Association for Retarded Citizens) have funding for emergency respite care.

David Schuster with the Bureau of TennCare reported that, in their continuing effort to resolve issues with TennCare coverage, they have been networking with many state agencies and individuals, including Dr. Larry Faust, and Manny Martins and the newly formed Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination. The TennCare office number is 615-741-5405 and the help line number is 877-580-6896. TennCare is involved in the revamping the system and has recently contracted with MedCat to create a system, which will allow ready access to correct and accurate data across the state by May 2005. The TennCare online site may be accessed, currently, through the Governor's site. Dara Howe expressed concern regarding the rights of parents to appeal decisions under the

new guidelines, stating that managed care will interpret the law. David stated that a commission to oversee such matters will be formed in TennCare. and that TennCare is making every effort to create a standard, which managed care, will follow.

Dara Howe gave an update on the federal grant that has been awarded to Family Voices of Tennessee from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. As a part of the grant, a comprehensive family survey has been put together, in collaboration with the state Title V grant, to look at access/quality issues in services provided throughout the state. She stressed the importance of the inclusion of data from families being served in early intervention programs. The survey may be downloaded or filled out on line. In the event of literacy/time issues, it may also be completed by phone. Dara speculated that families will more readily participate in the survey if they see that it will allow a voice for them. The database has been created to receive information, and is modeled after a recently published national survey, which contains data on children with healthcare needs.

Judy Smith, with the Department of Human Services, announced the publication of the Early Childhood Education and Early Learning Developmental Standards. The standards were developed through the Good Start, Grow Smart initiative, a Federal-State partnership that creates linkages between Child Care Development Funds (CCDF), including funds set aside for quality, and state public and private efforts to promote early learning. The Department of Human Services, along with the Department of Education, Early Childhood Education, and Head Start developed the voluntary guidelines on language, literacy, pre-reading and numeracy. A plan for the education and training of child care providers, and a plan for coordination across at least four early childhood programs is being coordinated through the Child Care Resource and Referral Network. The standards may be viewed at [www.state.tn.us/sbe/whatsnew.html](http://www.state.tn.us/sbe/whatsnew.html). Monitoring, to determine if the standards will have a positive impact and outcome for children, will be contingent on funding. The standards are related to birth to five and are aligned with K-12 standards. Parents are encouraged to use the standards with their children. Brenda Bledsoe plans to create a link to this site on the state's early intervention site.

The council's representative from higher education, Marty Herndon, reported that four-year institutions across the state are expanding the number of hours in their programs to 120 to help with the transition from community colleges to four-year programs. Marty has been appointed to the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.

Bill Wilson, Director of Legal Services for the State Department of Education, was introduced.

Sarah Willis gave an update on the re-authorization of IDEA, stating that the legislature may authorize Part B and C with a definition that would necessitate a change for Tennessee, with the inclusion of children affected by drug abuse.

### **Lead Agency Reports**

Brenda Bledsoe presented members of the SICC and guests with public awareness materials, including totes, clipboards, lanyards, and district directories, distributed at the statewide Coordinators Conference in September. Cindy Mayer distributed the third printing of Early Edition, the early intervention system's birth to five newsletter. The first printed is available on the state website. The publication includes a consult for early intervention and preschool. Each edition includes an article related to the law under A, B, C, and D (technical assistance and research). This is a public awareness document and its distribution was encouraged to council members and guests.

Brenda has been named the principal investigator for a state improvement grant in early intervention. The Center of Excellence at East Tennessee State University under Dr. Clarissa Willis will conduct training for service providers through kindergarten. Schools will be chosen for participation from those

involved in the Reading First grant and will include child care providers and teachers in general curriculum in early childhood.

### **Introduction of New Staff**

Claudia Weber is working at the state office as an infant/toddler consultant and will assume the responsibility for processing invoices and tracking funds. She will also be the first line of contact for the State Interagency Coordinating Council. She participated in three days of state meetings before she officially became a state employee, and her expertise will be welcome in expediting financial obligations throughout the state.

Kathy Strunk is the new preschool coordinator for the state. Her background includes experience working in Sumner County, and she holds a Ph.D. in government and politics from Vanderbilt.

Samantha Law is an employee of the University of Kentucky but is working with Tennessee through the General Supervision Enhancement Grant to develop a database for the State Department of Education.

### **Funding Task Force Update**

Lynne reported that the Funding Task Force had its second meeting on October 12<sup>th</sup> after a first session, which consisted of the creation of a vision for the group. The focus of the second meeting was to state the important issues involved to improve the system and funding. The group's input on critical issues included:

- 1) A comprehensive child find system
- 2) Family participation
- 3) Insurance access – central billing
- 4) Alternate sources of funding
  - a) Business Coalitions
  - b) Grants –companies
- 5) Possibility of TennCare match
- 6) Service guidelines
- 7) How early intervention relates to other early childhood efforts
- 8) Consistency and eligibility
- 9) Models of service delivery
- 10) Models of service coordination

Suggested organizations to involve in the process were:

- 1) The Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities
- 2) Head Start
- 3) The Department of Human Services
- 4) Local Education Agencies
- 5) Childcare
- 6) HIPPA – FERPA
- 7) I.A.

Sarah Willis and Brenda Bledsoe will cluster topics and organize work groups. The group will meet monthly until December, with the goal of a formal document to be presented to the Governor's office for approval. A handout regarding the make-up, funding flow and parameters for local offices was available for anyone who had not attended the meeting. The group will continue to work to create a flow chart.

### **OSEP Annual Performance Report Response**

An annual performance report has been submitted to OSEP for the last two year. In its response to the report, one issue that was problematic statewide was the requirement to respond in sixty days. The state is required to submit a plan for full compliance in one year. Failure will result in conditional funding. The follow up for the last annual performance report was due on October 11<sup>th</sup> and addressed child find with various language groups. Census data has been used in an effort to find pockets of such groups. Hopefully, resources at the local level will be able to define groups.

### **National Accountability Conference**

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) presented an analysis of annual performance reports nationwide at the Accountability Conference in New Orleans. They also looked at state efforts to document outcomes. The National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) will post findings on its website. Bruce Bull, a national consultant from Oregon met with the group. Janelle Luster and Jeff Harlowe from the national monitoring system will visit the state office for additional input.

### **Status on Implementation of Revised Monitoring System**

A pilot monitoring was conducted in the Greater Nashville District. A twelve-county area in west Tennessee was also involved in self-monitoring with Jamie Kilpatrick. Work groups have been established to communicate with larger groups. The Department of Mental Retardation Services and technical assistance staff are working together, which has resulted in numerous e-mail and phone questions. Linda Hartbarger will conduct the first of three trainings, in Johnson City, on October 21<sup>st</sup>. She noted that productive discussion and questions have been generated. TIPS and TEIS are working on a steering committee and looking at self-assessment documents. Brenda noted that the system shift in the self-assessment with the role of regional people in technical assistance. Catherine Goodwin commented that the pilot in Greater Nashville included six counties, DMRS, and TIPS. Training took place from June through August with pilot providers submitting self-assessments and program improvement plans. All providers have developed a strategy for completing this project and participants are realizing the advantage of using this process and the data it generates. Gayle Feltner noted that the self-assessment allows agencies to look at themselves rather than being given a grade by the state. Compliance and accountability will be remediated within the year. Questions regarding monitoring can be directed to Jamie Castle or regional personnel.

### **Workgroups – Child Outcomes;SIG and the Annual Service Coordination Conference**

In the interest of time, Brenda Bledsoe announced that the reports of Child Outcomes and the Annual Service Coordination Conference will be presented at the next quarterly SICC meeting.

### **Presentation of Service Coordinator Training Modules**

After input from committee members and statewide consulting, Susan Addison has created a series of ten modules, which standardize training for service coordinators in Tennessee. Implementation and requirements are still being discussed and public input has been requested with a goal the final product will be instituted as a requirement for any service coordinator in Part C. The project began with a service coordinator survey of training needs, the application of modules from the Southeast District applied as foundations, and a review by TEIS. Ninety-five individuals participated in a statewide review.

The modules consist of:

- 1) Service Coordination
- 2) Partnering with Families

- 3) Typical Child Development
- 4) Law, Regulations, and Procedural Safeguards
- 5) Natural Environments – Research and Evidence-based Practices
- 6) Gathering Information, Intake and Referral, and Building Resources
- 7) Evaluation and Assessment
- 8) Individual Family Service Plan
- 9) Transitions
- 10) Wisdom From the Journey – Family Perspective

A closing presentation, by Susan Addison, provided an emotionally moving journey of the work of early intervention and its impact on the lives of children and their families across the state, in a Power Point presentation, accompanied by the music of Josh Grogan's "You Give Me Strength."

**Lynne Harmon adjourned the meeting.**

The January quarterly SICC meeting will be held in Nashville on January 11, 2005 with location and time to be announced.